

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4599

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 25584

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON ROBERT BOULIN, NEWLY-
NAMED MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

REF: PARIS 25052

1. BOULIN, BORN 20/7/20 IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE, HAS BEEN A WELL-KNOWN NATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURE SINCE THE EARLY SIXTIES, WHEN HE WAS THE JUNIOR MEMBER OF A MICHEL DEBRE CABINET. A LAWYER OF THE PARIS BAR, BOULIN WAS FIRST ELECTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE GAULLIST TICKET IN 1958, HOLDING HIS POST UNTIL 1961. IN 1959 HE WAS ELECTED MAYOR OF LIBOURNE IN HIS NATIVE GIRONDE DEPARTMENT, A POSITION HE STILL HOLDS. HIS LIST OF POSTS IN THE GOF IS LONG AND VARIED:

1961: STATE SECRETARY FOR REPATRIATED FRENCHMEN

1962-1967: STATE SECRETARY FOR THE BUDGET (REASSUMING THE POST UNDER THREE DIFFERENT CABINETS)

1967-1968: STATE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMY AND FINANCE

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1968: MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE

1968-1969: MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
1969-1972: MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH
1972-1973: MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS ATTACHED
TO THE PRIME MINISTER
IN 1973 HE WAS REELECTED TO HIS ASSEMBLY SEAT, WHICH HE
HELD UNTIL HIS CURRENT NOMINATION. THROUGHOUT HIS
PUBLIC CAREER HE HAS BEEN FIRMLY ATTACHED TO THE UDR
(GAULLIST) PARTY (WITH SINGLE EXCEPTION IN 1974 MENTIO-
NED BELOW) AND TO ITS PRECEPTS. BOULIN HAS ALSO BEEN
ACTIVE IN PRIVATE AFFAIRS, MOST NOTABLY AS A HIGH-
RANKING EXECUTIVE IN THE PERRIER BEVERAGE FIRM. HE WAS
ACTIVE IN THE RESISTANCE AND RECEIVED BOTH THE MEDAL
OF THE RESISTANCE AND THE WAR CROSS. BOULIN IS MARRIED
AND HAS TWO CHILDREN. FILES REVEAL NO KNOWN TRIPS TO THE
US, NOR IS HE KNOWN TO SPEAK ENGLISH.

2. BOULIN HAS BEEN KNOWN TO USG OFFICIALS SINCE HIS
FIRST CABINET APPOINTMENT IN 1961. AT THAT TIME, HE WAS
CLOSELY ALLIED WITH PRIME MINISTER DEBRE, AND CAME INTO
THE CABINET IN SPITE OF HIS (BOULIN'S) BEING KNOWN IN
CERTAIN CIRCLES FOR HIS ANTIPATHY TO DE GAULLE'S ALGER-
IAN POLICY. BOULIN HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN CLOSELY ALLIED
WITH BORDEAUX MAYOR AND 1974 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS. SO CLOSE ARE THEIR PROFESSIONAL
AND SOCIAL TIES THAT BOULIN FOUND HIMSELF OBLIGED, ONLY
FOUR DAYS AFTER HIS NEW APPOINTMENT, TO STATE TO THE
PRESS: "I AM NOT A DELEGATE OF THE MAYOR OF BORDEAUX."
AS A RESULT OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC'S ELECTION TO
HEAD THE UDR IN THE SUMMER OF 1975, BOULIN, "IN AN HON-
EST REFLEX", RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY IN DECEMBER OF THE
SAME YEAR, REJOINING TWO MONTHS LATER WHEN HE WAS ASSUR-
ED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S TENURE AS SECRETARY GENERAL
WOULD BE ONLY TEMPORARY. IN FACT WITHIN THE PARTY HE IS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 25584

GENERALLY CONSIDERED A TEMPERAMENTAL AND VOLATILE MILITANT, THOUGH MANY OTHER UDR DEPUTIES WERE ALSO OPPOSED TO CHIRAC'S NOMINATION.

3. BOULIN IS REPORTEDLY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE PRESIDENT'S DECLARED AIM OF BROADENING THE MAJORITY TOWARDS THE CENTER-LEFT, WHICH IS SURPRISING IN SO STRICT A GAULLIST. HIS BROAD -- IF SOMETIMES TROUBLED -- RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARLIAMENTARIANS MAKE HIM EMINENTLY SUITED TO HIS NEW POST; AND THE IMPORTANCE THAT VGE ATTACHES TO BOULIN'S JOB, IN THIS TIME OF ERRATIC INTRA-MAJORITY RELATIONS, IS CLEARLY REFLECTED BY THE PRESIDENT'S ELEVATING THE POST FROM A STATE SECRETARYSHIP TO A MINISTRY, THUS GIVING BOULIN THE SAME JOB HE HAD IN 1972-1973.

4. USG OFFICIALS WHO HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH BOULIN DESCRIBE HIM AS ENERGETIC, INTELLIGENT, PRESENTABLE AND PERSUASIVE. HE HAS ALSO EVINCE THE COURAGE TO PUSH
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THROUGH UNPOPULAR REFORMS WHILE HOLDING ONE OF HIS MANY CABINET POSTS, AND IS WELL REMEMBERED FOR HIS REFUSAL TO BOW TO THE FARMERS WHILE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN THE EPHEMERAL (MAY TO JULY) FOURTH GOVERNMENT UNDER POMPIDOU: "I WILL NOT TOLERATE FARMERS' GOING OUT IN THE STREETS; I WON'T GIVE THEM CRUTCHES TO LIMP APART FROM OTHERS." HIS TALENTS AS A CONCILIATOR ARE REPUTEDLY WELL REFINED, AND HIS GAULLIST CREDENTIALS MAKE HIM WELL SUITED FOR DEALING WITH THE MAJORITY'S MOST RECALCITRANT MEMBERS.
RUSH

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